(d) to what extent it would be helpful to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The Government of India have increased the Minimum Support Price for Oilseeds and Pulses by Rs. 100 per quintal while the MSP of Wheat by Rs. 10 per quintal. The details of MSP fixed for various crops for 2002-03 marketing season are as under:

| Commodity | MSP (Rs. per quintal) | Increase in 2002-03 over 2001-02 Marketing Season (Rs.) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Wheat | 620 | 10 |
| 2. Barley | 500 | — |
| 3. Gram | 1200 | 100 |
| 4. Masur (Lentil) | 1300 | 100 |
| 5. Rapeseed/Mustard | 1300 | 100 |
| 6. Safflower | 1300 | 100 |

The increases effected in the MSPs are expected to provide incentive to the farmers to invest and improve production and productivity and encourage diversification of crops.

**Suicide by cotton farmers**

3332. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cotton growing farmers who committed suicide during the last one year;

(b) the reasons for their taking such an extreme step; and

(c) the details of measures taken by Government to avert such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) During 2001-02, the Government of Karnataka reported 79 cases of suicide by farmers. For 2001-02, no other State has reported suicide by farmers.

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to take necessary measures in this regard. The Government of India supplements

the efforts of the State Governments with financial and logistic support, like input subsidy to small and marginal farmers, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, Kisan Credit Card, etc.

**Agricultural education at school level**

†3333. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of Vice-Chancellors of Agricultural Universities and the scientists concluded recently;

(b) if so, the main issues raised therein;

(c) whether these Vice-Chancellors demanded from Government to start agricultural education at school level and to accord technical education status to agricultural education; and

(d) if so, Government reaction on these demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. It was held on 28th & 29th January, 2002.

(b) Issues deliberated included salient achievements in education during Ninth plan, need for reorientation in Tenth Plan with built in support for individual Faculty. Issues related to Statutory powers to ICAR for regulating Standards of agricultural education, introduction of Agricultural education at School level, measures to develop Vocational courses, containing education and out reach programmes were other highlighting features.

(c) Yes, Sir. The issue was deliberated.

(d) (i) It was decided to set up inter-Ministrial co-ordination committee to explore the feasibility of providing Technical/Professional Status to Agricultural education involving Ministry of HRD, Departments of Rural Development, Agriculture & Co-operation & Animal Husbandry.

(ii) State Agricultural Universities are being requested to interact with State Educational Board to look into possibility of making Agriculture as an optional subject at +2 level.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.